



EPISODE 2x10:
“LETTERS TO HOME”

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Teaser

INT. PARTY - BALLROOM – NIGHT

The elegant ballroom is filled with ritzy PARTY-GOERS, circulating WAITERS, and live MUSICIANS. Mounds of fresh fruit and expensive-looking arrangements of cheeses and meats cover a buffet table.

There is also a hovering chandelier.

ATHERTON WING and INARA dance into frame with some of the other guests.

ATHERTON

I'm trying to give you something, you know. A life. If you want it.

INARA

(uncomfortable smile)

Atherton...

ATHERTON

You can live here, on Persephone. As my personal Companion.

INARA

You are a generous man.

ATHERTON

That's not a "yes."

INARA

(after a beat)

I couldn't leave Serenity... or my captain.

Atherton abruptly stops dancing.

ATHERTON

You belong here, Inara, not on that flying piece of *gos se*, with that *bèn* <stupid> captain of yours. You see that, don't you?

INARA

Atherton, language.

ATHERTON

What, "piece of *gos se*"? But it is a piece of *gos se*.

INARA
I said no, Atherton.

Atherton grabs Inara by the arm, hard, and starts pulling her off the dance floor.

ATHERTON
Money changed hands, which makes you mine for tonight. No matter how you dress yourself, you're still a—

A hefty PUNCH knocks Atherton to the floor.

JAYNE (VO)
Now, Ma, I couldn't let a troll like Atherton Wing say what he was going to say.

Atherton looks up, shielding his eyes from the light of the chandelier, to see JAYNE, decked out in a fine outfit complete with a white COWBOY HAT.

JAYNE
I believe the lady said no, *sha gua* <stupid melon-head>.

The music stops playing and the guests stop dancing.

INARA
(pleased but worried)
Oh, Captain...

JAYNE (VO)
Now, I know I shouldn'ta used cuss words, Ma, but that guy, he just gets me all worked up...

JAYNE
What? The *hwoon dahn* <bastard> deserved it.

ATHERTON
(standing)
I accept!

STEWARD
There has been a challenge!

Atherton is on his feet.

ATHERTON
I hope you're prepared, captain.

JAYNE
What in the ruttin' hell for?

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN, takes off Atherton coat and gives him a fancy SWORD.

At the same time:

STEWARD

A duel has been called. Honour must be satisfied.

JAYNE

Honour!? That boy got less honour than a slaver. Least they're honest 'bout who they are.

Atherton, now armed, rushes at Jayne and takes a SWING at him.

Jayne jumps back, avoiding the blade.

JAYNE

Hey!

INARA

Here, my brave Captain!

She THROWS him a sword from the side of the circle of guests that has formed around the two duellists.

Jayne deftly catches it and PARRIES Atherton's next attack.

Atherton tries to jab Jayne, but again Jayne defends.

Jayne swings at Atherton, who stumbles but manages to throw the attack off and makes an attack of his own. The blade cuts into Jayne's side, drawing blood and cutting his shirt.

Jayne winces and looks down at the cut.

JAYNE

That's my best shirt, gorramit!

Jayne CHARGES Atherton, who SWINGS round, out of the way.

Jayne turns back and suddenly they are in a whirl of blades. Initially, Jayne advances with superb skill.

But then, Atherton gets in a well-timed kick - forcing Jayne back against a pillar.

Atherton raises his sword arm for the decisive blow, and SWINGS – At the last second, Jayne DODGES the blade, and HEAD BUTTS him. Atherton falls, his sword CLATTERING to the floor at his side.

Silence around the room. Then:

STEWARD

You have to finish it, lad. For a man to lie beaten and yet breathing, it makes him a coward.

INARA

It's a humiliation.

JAYNE

Sure. It would be humiliating, having to lie there while the better man refuses to slice you open and spill your guts all over this fancy dance floor. Mercy is the mark of a great man.

(beat)

Which is what I am.

He steps back. Everyone starts CLAPPING in rapturous admiration of 'Captain Jayne,' as Inara starts walking seductively over to him.

JAYNE (VO)

So there I was, Ma, the whole room clappin' and cheerin' for what I done. Seems Atherton and his cronies weren't too popular with a lot of folk, and me, the space captain, come in and done them a world of right.

Jayne takes Inara's hand and pulls her into a passionate embrace.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)

I took the princess in my arms and she said—

INARA

Kiss me Jayne... Oh, Jayne. Jayne! JAYNE!

WASH (VO)

Jayne! Jayne!

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM – DAY

Jayne, wearing his ORANGE WOOLY HAT, sits at the dining table, writing. His face is screwed up in concentration.

WASH leans across the table, and clicks his fingers in front of Jayne's face.

WASH

Jayne! Hello? I thought the fact that the engine is off and the sun is shining through the roof there might have given away that we landed five minutes ago.

Jayne swats Wash's hand away and continues to write.

JAYNE (VO)

Well, we left Persephone soon after I dealt with Atherton and rescued Inara. We set off on our next job. I had noticed that some of the crew, mostly notably my cabin boy, Mal, had become pretty—

WASH

...It's finally time to get these *fu chòu* <stinking> fish off the ship. I thought you'd be jumping at the opportu—

Wash peers down at the pile of papers on the table.

WASH (cont'd)

You're *writing*?

(mock-enthralled)

It's like watching a monkey ride a bicycle...

JAYNE (VO)

—distracted of late. It's kind of a common prob—

WASH

Is it a dirty letter to a special lady?

No reply.

JAYNE (VO)

—lem in space, but like I always say—

WASH

A dirty letter to a special man?

Jayne doesn't reply, though his face betrays his annoyance.

JAYNE (VO)

"If you can't hack it out in the black, don't pick your feet up from the...urh... dirt."

WASH

You know, if it's a dirty letter, just say and I'll-

Jayne SLAMS his fist down on the table.

JAYNE

Gorramit, Wash! Don't that huge yapper of yours ever shut up?!

Wash stands there looking smug.

Jayne stands, looking very angry at Wash.

Wash's smugness fades.

KAYLEE pokes her head in.

KAYLEE

Cap'n says come on! Jorgensen wants to get us unloaded,
then he's gonna have us for dinner!

Jayne is already out of his chair, pushing past Wash and tucking his letter away.

JAYNE

Ooh. Free food!

Act One

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON – DAY - ESTABLISHING

Jorgensen's oasis comprises a few dozen lush, tropical acres sharply edged by the gray, lifeless moon.

On the lifeless side, a dust storm rages, setting off the faint red shimmering of an ATMOSPHERIC SHEILD, surrounding the oasis.

A group of beautiful buildings surround a sprawling mansion in the middle of the oasis. The back of the mansion opens to a vast courtyard, part of which doubles as a

LANDING PAD

where Serenity sits between two luxurious SHUTTLES and a SPACE YACHT.

INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY

ZOE, BOOK and SIMON move large fish-filled CRATES from the Cargo Bay onto the landing pad. RIVER walks between the crates, pointing inside each, apparently taking some sort of head count.

ZOE

(holding her nose)

First job back, and what do I get? More fish.

Kaylee comes down the stairs, grabs a crate, and drags it with some difficulty.

KAYLEE

Well, they're tasty once cooked.

SIMON

I suppose all the way out here, fish is a rare commodity.

ZOE

(disgusted look)

Not rare enough.

BOOK

What I fail to understand is why a man with Jorgensen's resources doesn't hire a freezer ship.

RIVER

(sniffing one of the crates)

Fresh. Likes them still swimming.

WASH (OS)

Well, all these particular fish are doing is rotting.

Jayne, now hatless comes down from the upper level. Wash follows.

WASH (cont'd)

I miss those treasured days gone by when my spaceship actually smelled like... spaceship.

JAYNE

Smells like money to me.

They reach the cargo bay floor. Wash looks a little green at the sight of the mounds of fish in their crates.

Jayne grins at his reaction. Jayne grabs a small fish and slips it into Wash's pocket as he walks past. Wash doesn't notice.

BOOK

The smell reminds me of the open ocean.

(slapping Wash on the back)

You just need to find your sailor's legs.

Wash looks like he just threw up in his mouth.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MOON – LANDING PAD – SAME TIME

Mal stands with JORGENSEN, as blimped as ever, among the crates on the cargo bay ramp. The crew keeps unloading crates around them. Jorgensen pets Mal's head as if Mal were a puppy that just learned to do a trick.

JORGENSEN

You're a peach, Mal. A real one-a-kind runner. A bonus to you for getting me my yummys so quickly.

MAL

Well, you'd be surprised how efficient we are when there ain't meteors hurtling through the sky at us.

JORGENSEN

Oh, forget the berries, Malcolm. You always are worried on the little things. I was very concerned for you and your crew's welfare, when I heard what happened at Verbena.

MAL

Kind of you to say.

(curt)

Our favourite twins were not as understanding.

Jayne comes down the ramp with a crate, sets it down with the others, and hovers behind Mal as Jorgensen talks.

JORGENSEN

(smiling)

Mingo and Fanty can be a little stuck up in their own coin-counting. Take it from me – money does not hold all the answers. People are what makes one happy.

JAYNE

I heard 'money.' We talkin' bout our fee?

Mal turns and looks at Jayne, annoyed.

MAL

Yeah. People are just the best.

Wash carries a crate down the ramp, struggling under the weight. He has to stop – Jayne is in his way, and he ain't moving. Wash looks back at Zoe, irritated.

JORGENSEN

(chuckling)

Malcolm, you are my favourite captain and you are a good man, but if you want to truly make it in this 'Verse, you are going to have to learn to temper your emotions with some common sense.

JAYNE

Hear that Mal – common sense. Maybe you can afford some now when Jorgi here pays us our—

MAL

Jayne!

(indicating the crate)

You have a job.

WASH

(pushing Jayne with his crate)

Yeah, big guy. Lord knows you ain't paid for your business ethic. How about letting Mal handle the finances and scurrying along? This crate is killing me.

Jayne pushes Wash right back, but doesn't move. Wash gives up, dumps his crate right there, and shuffles off back into the cargo bay.

JORGENSEN

Now where was I? Oh yes – that nasty business on Verbenia got me thinking – I want to make sure you and your wonderful crew are out of harm's way. I know that not all of your jobs are legitimate. Or safe.

MAL

I wouldn't say that they were 'illegal,' per se—

JAYNE

'Cept those ones where guns play a predictable role.

MAL

Jayne...

(closed eyes, gritted teeth)

Zoe has a fish with your name on it.

JORGENSEN

(eyeing Jayne's belt)

And if you don't mind, my dear boy, please leave your weaponry on the ship. No guns on my moon.

(to Mal)

I don't mind what you did before, Malcolm, but I'd rather not have to replace you. If you're willing, I want you to come and work exclusively for me. All legal. No need for guns any more at all. Ever!

Beat as it sinks in. Mal reacts with pleasant surprise. Jayne still hasn't left, and looks just as intrigued.

JAYNE

(slapping Mal on the arm)

Listen to that Mal! We'd be legit.

(to Jorgensen)

We'd still get paid the same, right?

MAL

Well, I don't know what to say.

JORGENSEN

I have made good careers for all my favourite runners. Riggs, Dresden, Hush. All made much wealth while working my runs. You'd be making more money and have more stability this way, I think.

MAL

(thinking it over)

No doubt, the very cherry it would be... but Mingo and Fanty...

JORGENSEN

Ah, yes. Of course. They would lose their cut...

MAL

Ain't gonna appreciate that terribly, I'm thinking.

JORGENSEN

Not to worry, Malcolm. I'll sort it all out. Ensure they see sense.

Jorgensen grabs Mal in a BIG HUG.

JORGENSEN

It's so good to know that you want to work for me.

(lets Mal go)

I'll see you all over dinner.

He leaves.

MAL

Uh - did I just make a decision?

Jayne shrugs. He and Mal turn back to the rest of the crew who have all congregated at the edge of the ramp.

ZOE

Does he mean it, sir? About going legit?

MAL

Seems like. You okay with that?

KAYLEE

(sighs)

Guess it means an end to all our exciting heroical-like adventures.

(brightens)
Least we'll be able to buy new parts!

WASH
Exciting as they are, I for one can live without the heroics... and all affiliated bullets.
(to Zoe)
Maybe we can even take a holiday? You remember those?

JAYNE
Ain't that what you had on Haven?

ZOE
(ignores him)
Would be good to know there's more than protein to look forward to.

MAL
Some due time off might be plum.

BOOK
So long as you drop me off home before you go on holiday, I say have fun.

MAL
You don't want to stick around on Serenity, now that we're thinking of runnin' all straight-and-narrow like, shepherd?

BOOK
Haven's my home now.

There's an awkward look between these two, though it's lost on the rest.

MAL
(tense)
Right.

WASH
Hey, maybe we can go back to that moon? The one that the Shepherd found.
(smiling to Zoe)
What did I call it again...

EXT. ZOE'S MOON - DAY

A beautiful river with white sandy shores winds through a decent-sized clearing. Serenity straddles the river, tail over one shore, airlock ramp on the other. The girls swim in the water, much splashing abounds.

Jayne (wearing his white cowboy hat) strides down the open cargo bay ramp, followed by Book.

BOOK

Next time I need a miracle, Captain, I know who I need to talk to. How did you find this place?

JAYNE

Basic planetary topography. Everyone knows that.

Kaylee swims close, in a bikini.

KAYLEE

Oh my gosh! It's beautiful! You're so amazing, Cap'n.

Inara looks up from the water as well, in a bikini.

INARA

Jayne, this place is...

JAYNE

Yeah, yeah, I know.

River has sand cupped in her hands, offering it to Jayne.

RIVER

Zhè lǐ yǒu shā <Here is some sand> Captain.

(hugs Jayne)

You are the peak of brilliance.

(in his ear)

I'm so crazy!

JAYNE (VO)

First sane thing t'ever leave her mouth.

Kaylee pushes herself up and out of the water, with Inara, dripping wet.

KAYLEE

So... What you going to call it, Cap'n?

JAYNE

Hurh?

Inara sidles up to Jayne as well.

INARA

The moon. Maybe you could name after someone special.

KAYLEE

Someone close by, maybe.

Jayne ponders this for a moment – the three women – River, Kaylee, and Inara, hanging off of him.

JAYNE (VO)

Well, Ma, I hadn't really thought about it, but well I guess that as Captain I had a duty to give this paradise-world a name. Something special.

JAYNE

I'll call her "Ma's Moon."

BOOK

Excellent choice, Jayne.

INARA

(deflating)

Wonderfully fitting.

KAYLEE

(also deflating)

You sure you don't want to call it something else?

Jayne laughs, smiling at Kaylee's look of longing.

JAYNE (VO)

This is one of the problems with command that tends to crop up: What to do when members of your crew just like you a little too much... 'Course, I'd never take advantage of such a position...

Jayne puts his arm around Kaylee.

JAYNE

Kaylee.

(sighs)

We'll take a shuttle, find a nice secluded spot and christen it Kaylee's Cove.

Kaylee looks very happy at this prospect, and rubs his chest.

INARA
Can I come too, Captain?

RIVER
Me too!

JAYNE
Now, now. Come on, girls, one at a ti—

OFF SCREEN, Book clears his throat.

INT. SERENITY – COMMON AREA

Jayne sits bent over the low table.

Book stands over him, head cocked, reading the letter.

BOOK (cont'd)
If I recall correctly, son, that's not exactly how it happened.

JAYNE
(covering his writing)
Uh, hey, preacher.

BOOK
I just came to tell you it's time for dinner.
(sits down)
Writing home to your mother?

JAYNE
Just a note to say I'm okay and all.
(grins)
She likes to hear I ain't dead yet.

BOOK
(smiling)
And the bit where you name the moon that I believe I found?

JAYNE
Well, Ma likes to know what I've been doing, and she's kind of got it into her head that,
(uncomfortable)
uh... I'm the captain.

BOOK
And how did she get that notion, I wonder?

JAYNE

No idea...

BOOK

I'm sure she wouldn't mind if you weren't the captain.

JAYNE

Don't reckon it'll do no harm, Shepherd. Just want to make her proud.

BOOK

Jayne, your mother will love you whatever you do. She's your mother.

JAYNE

Yeah... And especial if I name a planet after her!

Book's smile fades as Jayne continues to write.

BOOK

Well, when you're ready to join us in the real world, dinner awaits.

INT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION - DINING ROOM – LATER

The spacious dining room has a high, ornate ceiling, portraits lining the walls, on either side of an impressive fireplace.

Everyone except Jayne sits at the huge dining table. Wash sits between Mal and Jorgenson.

Jayne enters. As he passes Wash, he slips another FISH into Wash's trouser pocket.

JAYNE

(softly to himself)

One for the road.

Jorgenson pours Wash a drink.

WASH

That's... that's plenty, thank you, Mr. Jorgensen.

JORGENSEN

What!? I thought pilots were famous for their drinking!

WASH

Only on the job, sir.

Jorgensen laughs hard and pats Wash heavily on his shoulder. Wash buckles slightly.

JORGENSEN

I want you to keep hold of this one, Malcolm. No other pilot like this that I know of! Truly amazing!

WASH

(embarrassed)

Well, you know... I wouldn't say amazing... but I mean, if you say so—

MAL

Still ain't sure that they'll go for it.

JORGENSEN

Relax! My man Edward is on top of things. I'm sure that it will be fine. They're reasonable people.

MAL

Really? Mingo and Fanty?

(beat)

Have you met them?

JORGENSEN

(laughing)

Yes, well perhaps for me, they'll be reasonable.

WAITERS enter the room bringing trays laden with the first course: a strange yellow meat, garnished with strips of a red vegetable.

SIMON

It's Mimian bladderfish, I believe?

JORGENSEN

Ahh, yes! The educated doctor. You are indeed right. It's imported straight from Mimas itself. Only for special occasions.

KAYLEE

Well ain't we the lucky ones.

BOOK

Yes, thank you for such a treat.

Jayne nudges his bladderfish suspiciously with his fork, sniffs it loudly, then forks a bit into his mouth.

JAYNE
Don't taste no different from regular fish.

KAYLEE
(elbows Jayne)
Manners...

Kaylee tries a piece. She chews it for a moment, then waves her hand in front of her mouth.

JAYNE
Besides the spice, that is.

She takes a large gulp of water.

JORGENSON
(laughing)
There's always one...

Simon refills Kaylee's glass.

SIMON
Bladderfish is quite strong unless you're used to it...
(glances at Jayne)
<Or have a toilet for a mouth>.

Kaylee just nods as she gulps down more water.

A prematurely-balding MAN in a smart suit enters, carrying a portable WAVE MONITOR. He approaches the table.

JORGENSEN
Edward! I hope you were successful?

EDWARD
Yes, sir. The Holden brothers will be ready to talk momentarily. They do want more than you originally agreed to...

JORGENSEN
(sighs)
You did well to get them to the table, Edward.

EDWARD
Thank you, sir. I felt that you would rather discuss business in the comfort of the dining room, so I took the liberty of bringing the portable.

He lays out the portable Wave monitor in front of Jorgenson, Mal and Wash.

JORGENSEN
(smiles)
Always thinking Edward, always thinking. Thank you. But
where are my manners. Edward...
(indicating the table)
Captain Reynolds and the crew of Serenity.

Edward reaches out to shake the nearest hand – Mal’s – but misses it completely.

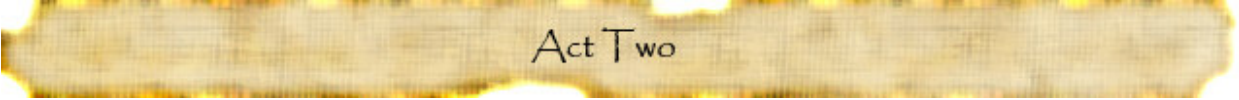
EDWARD
You must excuse me. I’m as blind as a bat without these
things.

He takes out a pair of fancy foldable EYEGLASSES, and fits them snugly to his face.
He scans the crew, who offer nods of greeting. Then—

Edward’s hand drops to his side before Mal has the chance to shake it.

ANGLE ON: Edward’s face - shock. A bead of sweat slips down his forehead.

EDWARD (VO)
Dear Mother, I met the man who destroyed our lives
today. Who destroyed everything...



Act Two

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

The crew and AMY MARIN (from ‘Salvage’) sit around the dining table, Amy and Mal opposite each other.

MAL
Folk have a right to live life the way they wanna. Find
their own way in this here hell ‘verse. Without someone
from on high bossin’ ‘em around, always getting’ ‘em in
trouble, throwin’ ‘em in the air lock with nuthin’ but a
comm to beg for help with. Folk wanna be left well
enough alone.

AMY
That’s what we’re doing! We’re trying to help these
people. Bring them the benefits of civilization we
promised. But it’s a <massive cost>, building—

MAL

Ain't nothin' without cost, Miss Marin, that's for sure.
Even the air we breathe ain't free no more. I aim to be
indebted to no one, 'cept the work of my own hands and
the sweat of my own brow.

(beat)

You call it civilized life? I call it a—

JAYNE (OS)

Mal!

CUT to REVEAL: Jayne sits at the head of the table.

JAYNE (cont'd)

When you're at my table you'll keep a civil tongue to our
guests. Politics ain't proper dinner talk. *Dong ma?*

MAL

(ashamed)

Sorry, Cap.

JAYNE (VO)

Boy had no manners, Ma. So I put him in his place.
Obvious he ain't had no momma to teach him, like I got.

JAYNE

(to Amy)

Now my *bao bei*, tell me that story you wanted to say
earlier.

WASH

(mouth full of food, spraying)

Yeah. Tell us a story.

JAYNE

(not looking at him)

Wash! Chew first, speak second.

WASH

(ashamed)

Sorry, sir.

SIMON

What the *gos se* is that *chou ma niao* <stinking horse-
urine> smell? You smell that, Captain?

JAYNE

Simon! Language!

SIMON
(smells Wash)
Xing jiāo <Intercourse>! Wash, you stink worse than a
two-bit *fàng pì* <fart> of a whore servicing a skunk!

JAYNE
Walk away from this table. Right now.

SIMON
(rises from table to leave)
Chur ni-duh <Screw you>! I hope you have runty little—

INT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION - DINING ROOM

The meal continues. Jayne writes his letter surreptitiously, under the table.

JAYNE (VO)
Well, Ma, you ain't never heard some of them awful curse
words he was usin'. They come outta his mouth like a
fountain. I weren't going to have any—

Kaylee kicks Jayne, discreetly, under the table.

JAYNE
(quietly)
Ow! Kaylee! What was th-

Kaylee quiets him with a shushing motion and directs his attention to –

THE HEAD OF THE TABLE

Jorgensen and Mal talk to Mingo and Fanty via a portable Wave monitor that has
been brought to the table. Wash sits, somewhat squished into place, between Mal
and Jorgensen.

MINGO (via Wave)
We don't exactly like where your tongue is leading you,
Reynolds. I seem to recall you working for us.

FANTY (via Wave)
Came begging for work, as I recall.

MAL
I ain't beggin' no more.

AT JAYNE'S END OF THE TABLE

Jayne slouches and picks at the remains of his meal.

JAYNE

Don't know why we don't just tell those two circus freaks
t'shove it.

Zoe elbows Jayne hard in the ribs, while keeping an interested smile to the rest of
the table. Kaylee, on the other side of Jayne, spits a giggle.

JAYNE

Laugh it up you two. Might haveta refine my policies on
hittin' girls.

ZOE

("yeah right")
Oh, you hit girls.

Something happens under the table: Jayne moves his leg suddenly, and Zoe shows
the slightest hint of something being painful, biting her lip to hide it.

JAYNE

And now I do it harder.

Edward sits at his place opposite Jayne, staring blankly at his food.

EDWARD (VO)

There he was, Mother. At the very same table as me. Just
sitting there, like there was nothing wrong. Like he had
nothing to do with it. Not a care in all the worlds.

MAL (OS, distant)

Whaddaya mean 'I owe you'!? Don't owe the two of you a
gorram thing besides a "nice knowin' ya."

SIMON

I don't believe that's the way to conduct business,
(to Zoe and Kaylee)
Is it?

MAL (OS, distant)

So, nice knowin' ya.

ZOE

With men like Mingo and Fanty? Not if you like all ten
fingers, it ain't.

EDWARD (VO)

What kind of a crew would take such a *yāo* <monster>
into their midst?

From the far end of the table, Mal bangs his fist at something Mingo or Fanty said. Wash mouths something to Zoe that looks like a plea for help.

EDWARD (VO)

I came back there to help you, Mother. To bring aid to the land of my forefathers. But he... oh, God you don't know how hard it was being in the same room as him...

JAYNE

Hey, Eddie? Wanna send that wine my way?

Edward looks up, startled. Suddenly, he stands up and buttons his suit awkwardly.

EDWARD

Uh... please excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. I have...

He leaves. Jorgensen watches him go, confused, but is too engrossed in the conversation with Mingo and Fanty to stop him.

Jayne leans across the table and gets the wine himself.

JAYNE

Coulda just said 'no'...

RIVER

Watched it all melt and now the spirit burns deep.

JAYNE

What now? Spirits?

River watches Edward leave, shaking her head.

JAYNE (cont'd)

No wine for you, if that's what you're askin'.

(shivers)

Gorram – imagine you on the juice...

River grins, eyes the wine.

AT THE FAR END OF TABLE:

MAL

(shouting and standing up)

—then I'm done yappin'. <Go kiss a duck's bottom>, all I care!

JORGENSEN

Gentlemen, gentlemen, please be calm. Let us sort this civilly.

(sighing)
I think the four of us should move this conversation to my office.

(to Mal)
I have a feeling that your crew may not be as interested in this discussion as you and I, Malcolm.

MOMENTARY ANGLE ON: River and Jayne, fighting over the wine bottle.

MAL
How'd you figure?

JORGENSEN
(lightly)
I think that you work them too hard.
(to Mingo and Fany)
Gentlemen, please wait a moment, while I transfer you to my office.

Jorgensen closes the portable Wave monitor and stands, addressing the table.

JORGENSEN
Please accept my apologies but I fear the dinner must come to an abrupt end. You are free to continue your desserts in my garden. The sun still shines on my rock for another few hours.

He and Mal leave.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – GARDEN – ESTABLISHING

Jorgensen's opulent garden contains hundreds of exotic flowers, a large vegetable plot, and a small wooded area.

The plant life grows through the surrounding fence, but stops dead when it touches the shield.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – GAZEBO – A BIT LATER

Wash and Zoe lounge in elegant chairs on a large terraced area at the edge of the garden, drinking wine. A BUTLER stands behind them.

WASH
This is the life...

Wash takes a deep nostrilly breath, and gags.

WASH (cont'd)
Minus that fish stench. It kinda sticks, doesn't it?

Zoe sniffs the air.

ZOE
Have you bathed since we finished unloading?

Wash pokes her. She smiles.

ZOE (cont'd)
Well, this is someone's life...

WASH
Come on Zoe. Fine wine brought to you by waiters with fancy-pants accents. A lush garden paradise and a <truly magnificent> house.

ZOE
All on an otherwise barren moon, surrounded by a *kwong-juh duh* <nuts> terraforming shield.

WASH
Not surrounded bunny, protected. Jorgensen has carved an oasis of life out of the desert...

Just then, a light breeze blows a leaf over the wooden fence, and across to the other side of the shield.

The leaf instantly shrivels, and disintegrates.

WASH (cont'd)
Great metaphor.

ZOE
This isn't real, Wash. You see out there?
(points to the shield)
That's the real world. That's where we live, like it or not.

WASH
(takes a sip of wine)
Honey, if we go legit, why can't we have a bit of this?
Wasn't that why we left Serenity in the first place?
Remember the 'not-wanting-to-be-in-mortal-danger-and simultaneously-trying-to-have-a-family' thing?

ZOE
So why are we back on the ship then?

WASH

Because it wasn't the right time to leave when we did.
You... We weren't ready.

Zoe stares ahead out to the barren wasteland beyond the shield.

WASH (cont'd)

Look, if we get this gig, we don't have to live on Serenity all the time. We'll have a regular flow of cash, we buy a place of our own somewhere. A *tián* <sweet> little house. Like we had on Haven. Somewhere to take the kids to, so they can run around. And when we get old and grey, we can settle there.

Zoe is still not entirely convinced. She continues to stare ahead, and sighs.

WASH (cont'd)

Picture it. I can park the shuttle in the garden and little Wash Junior can run around, eat dirt, get told off by his mother...

ZOE

What would you be doing?

WASH

(taking a sip)

I would be drinking the wine.

ZOE

(smiling)

And what about me?

WASH

You would be inside, de-worming little Hobie.

ZOE

We're not calling him 'Hobie.'

WASH

(fake annoyed)

But it's a family name! Dating back all the way to... me.

(beat, smiles)

It can wait 'till we actually make the baby.

He moves in to kiss Zoe on the neck. The butler clears his throat politely, stopping Wash short.

WASH

And we can wait to do that later, I'm guessing.

EXT. UNNAMED CORE PLANET – CITY CENTRE

On a deserted street in a futuristic city, Jayne and NICO stand back to back, arms up, ready for a fight. Nico, dressed in a black revealing catsuit, looks terrified; Jayne, cool and confident.

NICO
Jayne, sweetheart?

JAYNE
Yeah?

NICO
Promise you'll protect me?

Jayne looks around, eyeing the shadows. Nothing.

JAYNE
Sure.

NICO
Say it.

JAYNE (V.O.)
To be honest, Ma, I didn't know how we had got ambushed. My plan was foolproof. Anyway I had a feeling what was going to happen next.

JAYNE
I promise, baby.
(beat)
You got your gun?

Nico goes to check her holster. Nothing. She shakes her head.

JAYNE (cont'd)
Me neither.

Black-clad NINJAS sneak out of the shadows towards them.

NICO
I... love you.

JAYNE
Yeah. Figured.

Nico and Jayne drop into defensive martial arts stances.

JAYNE

They'll try to use the style of them shadow monks on us.
Whatever you do, keep a defensive parry to their long
arm, or they'll cut your forward stance to shreds.

NICO

Huh?

Two ninjas draw swords and approach.

JAYNE

Just follow my lead.
(to himself, shaking his head)
Blondes...

INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM

Jayne, wearing his orange woolly hat again, sits at the dining table, writing his letter. He has a small BOOK next to him. On one page is a picture of two men in a grappling in the manner of martial arts. Below is some Chinese text, which Jayne has his finger next to.

River stands unnoticed behind Jayne, peering over his shoulder.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)

You shoulda seen it, Ma. I swung round and used a *Yo-co
geri key-ya-gay* on the guy to the left—

RIVER

That's all wrong.

JAYNE

(startled, spinning round)
What the—?!?

RIVER

You wouldn't use that move. Your opponent could counter
that too easily. You'd use a *moh-wash-ee geri*.

(beat)

And *yo-ko geri kee-ya-gey* is spelt with a 'k' and no 'y'.

Jayne just looks plain confused.

RIVER

(shaking her head)
Just where did you go to school!?

JAYNE
S'plain bad manners to read another man's—

River puts her finger over Jayne's lips. Gets up close.

RIVER
(whispers)
And it isn't right. Tangent.

JAYNE
(getting up from the table)
What you talking 'bout, girl?

RIVER
Time is linear. Events have either occurred, are occurring, or will occur. Yours qualifies as none of the above. A tangent.

JAYNE
Listen girl, I don't know—

RIVER
(grabbing Jayne's hat off his head)
Fairy tales are for children, silly.

River runs away with the hat, brushing past Book, as he comes in.

JAYNE
Hey! You give that back! Gorram crazy little drunk...

INT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – FOYER

We hear the sound of shouting, muffled through a closed door.

EDWARD (VO)
I had to show them, Mother. Show them all what he did.

The office door flies open and Mal storms out.

In Jorgensen's office, Mingo and Fanty appear on a large wall screen monitor.

JORGENSEN (to the monitor)
Gentlemen, I'm sure Captain Reynolds did not mean what he said about your mother's... Actually, I don't believe I'm even familiar with that word, but I'm sure we can sort—


The rest is cut off as Mal slams the door behind himself. He stands in the hallway fuming.

EDWARD (VO)
I had to show the worlds what he did...

EDWARD (OS)
Captain Reynolds?

Mal turns to find:

Edward – a PISTOL in his hand, pointed straight at him.



Act Three

INT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Edward stands dead-straight, pistol on Mal.

A beat.

Mal slowly starts to raise his hands.

Edward hands his pistol over to Mal by the barrel.

EDWARD
I thought you might be interested in this.

Mal, relieved and very confused, takes the gun and examines it.

MAL
I don't see...

EDWARD
(pointing)
The engraving on the handle.

ANGLE ON: the handle of the gun. An engraving reads: "*J&W, 2459, On Shadow all life is sacred. Self-defence only.*"

MAL
A Johnson and Western. I didn't think there were any of these left, not since...
(beat)
How did you know I would have an interest?

EDWARD
(slight smile)
I recognized your accent when we first met.

(beat)
My family was from Shadow, too.

MAL
Don't hear your accent.

EDWARD
Father was career military. That piece was his. I left
Shadow when I was young, followed him in. With a new
posting every few years on all manner of rocks, you kind
of lose the twang.

MAL
(wary)
Alliance?

EDWARD
Yes, my belly was purple as a cherry. Does that bother
you?

MAL
You said 'was?'

He hands the pistol back to Edward. Edward tucks it in to the back of his trousers.

EDWARD
Perspectives do change occasionally, Captain.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – GARDENS – SAME TIME

River dances along a garden path, stopping every few seconds to examine a flower, or an insect as she goes – a genius hummingbird with a short attention span. Book strolls behind.

RIVER
(holding a leaf close to her eye)
Overly intricate... layers in layers in layers.

BOOK
(watching River with a smile)
I honestly can't understand how you're a dangerous
fugitive.

River stops. Looks directly at him—

RIVER
You know more than most.

—then goes back to her happy examination of the gardens delights.

BOOK
So do you, I feel.

River looks into the distance. Mal and Edward walk along another path.

RIVER
An old pain. Burning bush.
(quietly)
Unquenchable.

Silence.

River, head cocked, is examining a frog. It croaks.

RIVER (cont'd)
(apparently to the frog)
Liar.

BOOK
Who, me?

RIVER
'Thou shalt not lie.'
(shakes her head)
Shouldn't hide the truth of the matter.

BOOK
River, I don't understand.

River looks at him as though he has completely missed the point.

RIVER
His letter.

She turns back to the frog.

BOOK
Jayne's? Oh, you saw it too.

River's frog jumps away.

BOOK (cont'd)
Well, Jayne's application for sainthood is still under review.

RIVER
Just wants to be the hero.

EXT. JIANGYIN – BACKWOODS SETTLEMENT – NIGHT

River is tied to a pole above a pyre. Simon stands with her.

VILLAGERS, led by the PATRON, surround them, some of them holding TORCHES, ready to light the pyre.

PATRON

The witch must die. God commands it.

SIMON

Dào dì yù <Go to hell>!

VILLAGER

Cussin's not going to stop us, doctor.

RIVER

(to Simon)

Post-holer. Digging holes for posts...

(beat, shakes her head)

I'm so crazy!

A tender moment with Simon gazing up at River's smiling face, shaking his head. He rises one last step and wraps his arms around River.

SIMON

(to the villagers)

Light it—

(half a beat)

—You intercoursing *hwoon dahn*!

RIVER.

Time to go.

(mutters)

Crazy...

We hear a RUSHING sound of engines overhead.

SERENITY appears over the clearing where the trial is taking place. The CARGO BAY DOORS open to reveal MAL in a harness. He looks unsteady and a little nervous. Mal shoulders the rifle and draws a bead on the hill folk.

JAYNE (OS)

Well, look at this!

JAYNE, in a brown coat, and ZOE, emerge from the trees behind the crowd, guns drawn. Guess who's surrounded now?

JAYNE (cont'd)

Now, don't you think you're takin' this persecution complex of yours a mite far, doc? Why don'tcha just step down off that pyre?

ZOE

It's a stake, sir. Not a pyre.

JAYNE (VO)

Zoe may have been right, but truth was that what ever you called it, the doc had got himself into a difficult situation. Seems that if he'd listened to my advice about the locals being none too friendly then maybe I wouldn't have to come in and rescue 'em.

JAYNE

(laughing)

The foulmouthed doc and 'is moonbrain sister 'bout to get themselves burnt at the stake by a bunch of inbred, superstitious, *bèn* <stupid>—

(sneers at the nearest villager)

—ugly, dumbass hillfolk. 'Pears we got here just in time. What does that make us, Zoe?

ZOE

Big damn heroes, sir.

JAYNE

Ain't we just.

PATRON

This is a holy cleansing. You cannot think to thwart God's will.

By now Jayne and Zoe have made their way through the villagers to the pyre where River and Simon are.

JAYNE

You see the boy hanging out of the spaceship with the really big gun?

Above them, Mal hangs awkwardly out of Serenity's undercarriage.

Suddenly, Mal FALLS out of Serenity, hitting the roof of a building, ROLLING down it and on to the ground.

Silence. The villagers' attention moves from where Mal has fallen to Jayne and Zoe.

JAYNE (cont'd)
Um, well... Heh.

Some of the villagers move toward Jayne and Zoe.

Jayne cocks his gun, pointing it at the nearest approaching villager.

One of the villagers launches himself at Zoe. She falls back and a couple of the other villagers press the attack.

Jayne knocks them back with the butt of his gun and hauls the one attacking Zoe up and throws him off.

He lifts Zoe up, and there's a moment when their lips are close.

ZOE
Take me Sir. Take me hard.

Jayne gives her a charming smile and they turn to face the villagers.

JAYNE
Cut her down.

PATRON
That girl is a witch.

JAYNE
Yeah, but she's my witch.

SIMON
Yeah, you intercoursing *bèn dàn* <idiot>!

Jayne gives River a wink. She gives him an adoring smile.

Simon sees this. His face is the picture of annoyance.

JAYNE
(to the villager as he cocks his gun)
So cut her the gorram hell down.

River is quickly cut down, and she flops into the waiting arms of Captain Jayne. Simon stands to one side.

JAYNE (VO)
So I got them hillfolk to cut the little one down and me and the crew was set to leave. Another day, another life or two saved from hillfolk. For them, it was the best day ever.

Jayne kneels down and puts River over one shoulder. And as he stands up, playfully slaps her bottom. She giggles and he smiles.

INT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – DINING ROOM

Jayne – alone at the massive table – picks up his letter, grinning ear to ear.

He holds it up to the light for inspection.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – GARDENS - LATER

Mal and Edward walk through the colorful floral section of the gardens.

EDWARD

How are you finding working for Mr. Jorgensen?

MAL

Less near-death experience, which makes a pleasant change. Hoping that we'll be able to go full time with you.

EDWARD

Yes, Mr. Jorgensen has been raving about 'his new crew' ever since you won that race of his.

MAL

T'was a mite interesting I have to say.

EDWARD

(smiling)

Not my idea, thankfully.

EDWARD (VO)

Captain Reynolds seems like a good sort. If there were more like him on both sides of that Godforsaken war, it may have been far less bloody...

MAL

So how did you end up working for Jorgensen? Thought the Alliance would have nice shiny jobs for its brave heroes?

(off Edward's hurt look)

Sorry. Old habits.

EDWARD

I understand.

EDWARD (VO)

...he can't possibly realize the type of man he's associating with...

EDWARD (cont'd)

My father died before the war. My mother returned home, to Shadow. She was there when it happened...

(beat)

I was sort of... displaced after the war ended. With no home and with so few jobs going in the core, I ended up drifting out to the border planets. Got a job working security on New Melbourne, Jorgensen found me, made one of his famous 'better offers,' and here I am.

Mal nods. They continue walking.

EDWARD (VO)

...I needed to know whether it meant as much to him as it did to me...

EDWARD

Did you... lose anyone on Shadow?

MAL

(uncomfortable)

Everyone lost a lot in the war. More than I ever thought could be taken from a-one man. Shadow was just one grape in a whole bushel-o'-loss.

Edward looks out toward the emptiness beyond the atmospheric shield.

Jayne, with Book and River following, walks out from around a corner.

JAYNE

Preacher, I'm tellin' ya - there ain't nothin' wrong with it!

BOOK

I believe the good book disagrees with you on that one.

River eyes Edward.

MAL

Shepherd.

(motions to Jayne)

What's he done wrong now?

JAYNE

Nothin'!

MAL

Better not be messing up my deal, Jayne.

JAYNE

No more'n you have.

BOOK

(stepping in)

We were just having a philosophical, hypothetical chat on the value of truth telling. How God wants all—

Mal rolls his eyes and makes talky “blah blah blah” movements with his hand.

EDWARD (VO)

The truth. He didn't know what the truth was. I knew what I had to do, Mother. You would have been so proud to see it...

BOOK

Captain, whatever your feelings on—

There is a BEEPING SOUND. Edward pulls out his COMM UNIT.

JORGENSEN (via com)

Edward? I have good news! Please show our guests to the gazebo. I have a bottle waiting.

EDWARD (into com)

We'll be there momentarily.

(gesturing)

This way, gentlemen.

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – GAZEBO – MINUTES LATER

Jorgensen and the rest of the crew (Kaylee, Wash, Zoe, Simon and River) wait by a table set with a bottle of champagne and glasses.

Mal, Jayne, Book and River climb the short flight of stairs up to the gazebo. Edward follows them.

MAL

Twisted their arms off, did ya?

JORGENSEN

No thanks to you, Malcolm,

(laughs)

but yes, Mingo and Fanty agreed to the deal.

Jorgensen take the bottle and pops the cork.

MAL

Well now that's something to drink to.

JAYNE

Pass 'round the bubbly then.

Jorgenson passes the bottle to Jayne, who takes a swig straight from the bottle, then pours for the others.

KAYLEE

Cap'n, I got a whole list of new parts I want!

WASH

We asking for stuff? Oh, oh, can I get one of those large—

MAL

(smiling)

With your cut, Wash, you can have whatever jims your jam.

Behind Mal's back, Wash looks at Zoe questioningly.

WASH

(mouthing silently)

"Jims my jam?"

JORGENSEN

Before everybody goes on a spending spree, I'm afraid I need to tell you that the twins want a lump sum up front to cover lost revenue.

MAL

Why am I not surprised?

JORGENSEN

In the long run, though, you'll all be better off.

He hands Mal his glass of champagne.

BOOK

Going legitimate, Captain, I didn't think you could do it. I thought half the fun was sticking a thorn in the Alliance's paw.

MAL
(glances at Edward)
Well, perspectives do change sometimes, Shepherd.

He looks to Zoe. She smiles.

SIMON
Are you okay, Edward? You look a little flushed.

Edward musters a weak smile.

EDWARD
Fine, thank you. Just all the excitement.

He takes off his jacket, hanging it on one of the chairs. Tucked into the back of Edward's trousers, and unseen to the rest, is the pistol from earlier.

JAYNE
Don't know what I'm ruttin' going to do, now we gone legit. Not much call for shootin' with a hold full of slippery fish ain't stolen.

WASH
There's still heavy lifting.

BOOK
Good, honest hard work has its virtues, son.

JAYNE
Yeah, the very definition of 'high adventure.'

River spots Edward slowly moving in Jayne's direction, and putting his hands behind his back...

RIVER
(to herself)
No, no, no. He can change. Has changed.

WASH
But does it have to be fish? I mean, no offense, Mr. Jorgensen, but fish just ain't my thing.

JAYNE
(grinning)
Funny, seein' as how you smell like one.

KAYLEE
Yeah, why is that?

Wash protests with an inarticulate shrug.

Edward makes a sudden half-move forward. Interrupted by—

RIVER
I DON'T GIVE HALF A HUMP IF YOU'RE INNOCENT OR
NOT! NOW WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE YOU?

CLOSE ON: Book's face, full shock.

CLOSE ON: Edward's face, horror and terror.

ANGLE ON: The rest of the group looking at River with some puzzlement.

Until Edward whips his pistol out.


MAL
(sees the pistol)
Hey, whoa...

Now everybody sees the gun.

Edward suddenly turns full-circle, now facing Shepherd Book.

He cocks the gun. It HUMS.

EDWARD
I believe that's your line, sir.



Act Four

EXT. JORGENSEN'S MANSION – GAZEBO – CONTINUOUS

Edward's pistol is trained on Book. Everyone is silent.

They stand near the edge of the shield. Mal, Jayne and Jorgensen stand closest to Edward and Book – hands outstretched in that 'whoa, easy there' sort of way.

Zoe instinctively goes for her weapon – but it's not there. She holds Wash and Kaylee behind her. Simon pushes River behind a tree.

JORGENSEN
Edward?!?

EDWARD

Nobody move. I'm not going to hurt anyone innocent. I want you all to learn a truth.

MAL

Listen—

EDWARD

No! You listen!

(dramatically thrusts the gun at Book)

Do you know who this man is? This man who's been on your ship for how long!?

(beat)

This man is a monster. He hides behind that collar after all the things he has done.

(to Book)

Kneel.

BOOK

Look, son—

EDWARD

KNEEL!

Edward closes on Book.

EDWARD (cont'd)

Down on the ground! Hands above your head!

Book complies.

EDWARD (cont'd)

Do they know who you are? What you've done? Why don't you confess right here, 'preacher?' Why don't you tell your precious captain who you are?

BOOK

Wish I could, son, if I knew what in the 'Verse you were talking about.

Edward hits Book in the face with the butt of the pistol.

EDWARD

Hwoon dahn <bastard>! I was there! I saw what happened to my family! To everyone!

Jayne tries to edge closer to Book.

Edward points the pistol at Jayne.

MAL
(edging forward)
Easy, Ed. No need for any of this. You wanna talk, we can all head back inside for a pow-wow, get it all out in the open. Maybe some more ice cream, some wine. No guns required.

Jayne steps in front of Mal.

JAYNE
You wanna shoot someone, Eddy? Huh? Well, you got time for one clear shot, and if you miss, boy, you miss BIG!

Mal, once more, steps in front of Jayne.

MAL
(hissing softly to Jayne)
Now is not the time to grow a brain!

EDWARD
Either of you take another step, I will kill this old man first and you second! I got more than enough bullets to go around! Justice will be had today, one way or another.

BOOK
Edward, listen to me. I'm not the man you think I am.

EDWARD
And neither am I. Once upon a time I was Lance Corporal Edward Jung of the 107th Infantry Division, stationed on Shadow. My homeworld.

BOOK
I understand your grief, son, but killing me won't solve any damn thing.

EDWARD
No? You've been wrong before, haven't y—

BOOK
(losing his cool)
Look, you little worm, get your facts straight before—

Book begins to stand angrily, and Edward panics in response.

Jayne dives and pushes Book out the way as Edward fires.

Jayne rolls over and kicks Edward hard in the chest.

Edward flies back, over the low fence, and through the atmospheric shield.

Half his body lies inside the garden, the other half outside the shield – and all of it writhes in agony—

And then he goes limp.

Silence.

Kaylee suddenly screams: Jorgensen lies on the floor, a dark red patch spreading across his shirt.

Simon rushes to Jorgensen, rips the shirt open, checks his pulse.

Then he looks up and shakes his head.

Everyone is stunned – facing Jorgensen.

Everyone, except Book, who spots a piece of worn paper – a LETTER – sticking out Edward’s suit pocket.

KAYLEE (OS)

What we do, Cap’n?

Mal sighs.

MAL

Call Mingo and Fanty.

INT. BEAUMONDE - MAIDENHEAD BAR – NIGHT - LATER

MINGO and FANTY sit in a secluded booth, drinks set before them.

A portable Wave monitor shows Mal’s pained, smiling face.

MAL (via Wave)

Thank you. You’re... generous men, taking us back.

Mingo nods and closes the portable Wave monitor.

MINGO

Captain Reynolds is becoming a problem.

FANTY

Inconsistent.

MINGO

Unpredictable.

FANTY

Could hurt our interests, should that unpredictability turn our way.

MINGO

We need to cut ties.

FANTY

Indeed. Permanently.

MINGO

'Permanent' usually means 'messy.' We can't have 'messy.'

FANTY

Reynolds wants to prove himself again. Won't ask too many questions.

(beat)

I'm thinking... Lilac?

MINGO

That would take him very close to where those dreadful attacks took place.

FANTY

He may not survive.

MINGO

A shame.

FANTY

And if he does?

MINGO

We get what's due us, and he gets what's due him in the end, anyway.

FANTY

Either way the breasts bounce, this is the good captain's last job.

MINGO

With anyone. Ever.

They smile and clink glasses.

EXT. SPACE

Serenity sails through the black.

INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME

Zoe and Wash wait on the bridge as Mal enters.

WASH
So?

MAL
Kept me waiting, and had to grovel like a dog.

WASH
Yeah. We saw that part.

MAL
You were watching?

WASH
Caught the ending. Predictable, really.

ZOE
Least they agreed to take us back.

MAL
Gotta prove ourselves again. Still waitin' for the details.

WASH
But we're heading to Haven first, right? For the shepherd?

Awkward beat.

MAL
Right.

ZOE
What happened, sir, it wasn't your fault.

MAL
Weren't nobody's fault. But I sure would like to know what happened.

EXT. SPACE - SHADOW

We see the planet Shadow - a devastated black and grey wasteland of a planet.

EDWARD (VO)
I did it. I killed him.

FAST ZOOM: Continent.

There are no rivers or vegetation. Only ashen fields of what once were forests.

EDWARD (VO, cont'd)
I killed the man that killed you, Mother... That killed
everyone. Left him in pool of his own guilt and blood.

FAST ZOOM: Town.

Decimated and neglected buildings lie still in what was obviously once a prosperous town. There are no people alive here.

EDWARD (VO, cont'd)
Gave him more of a chance than he gave any of you.
Least he had a chance to defend himself.

INT. SERENITY – PASSENGER DORM

Book sits in his room, EDWARD'S LETTER clutched in his hands. Soft tears rolling down his face as he reads.

EDWARD (VO, cont'd)
I know you'll never read this, and what I did doesn't
change anything, but I needed to do it. I couldn't let him
live while you lay dead. I'm sorry that I couldn't help you.
I'm alone now. All alone.

There is a knock at the door.

Book puts the letter away, wipes his tears.

BOOK
Come in.

It's Mal.

MAL
Shepherd?

BOOK
Right where you left me.

Mal sits down on the chair opposite Book.

MAL
Came to see you were alright, considerin'.

BOOK
Considering.

MAL
It's not every day a preacher gets a gun toted to his ear.
(beat)
Or is it?

BOOK
(eye contact)
Why don't you just say what you came here to say, Mal?

Silence.

MAL
I understand a man has the right to his past. To... beat
down his own demons.

Long silence with constant eye contact.

Book wants to say something. CAN'T.

MAL (cont'd)
But Shadow was my past, too, Shepherd. Lost my
mother... My family... Friends...

Mal stands up.

MAL (cont'd)
If you know something about that past, it's my right too.
Think on that. S'all I'm gonna say... for now.

Mal leaves. Book pulls out the letter once more, and stares at it.

EXT. ARIEL – ST. LUCY'S MEDICAL CENTRE - BACK EXIT

Jayne, in an EMT uniform, Simon in his doctor's uniform, and River sitting in a wheelchair in a patient's gown (*pi gu* exposed), move quickly through the doors.

The doors aren't even shut behind them when SPOTLIGHTS spark to life, pinning Simon, River and Jayne in their crosshairs.

AGENT MCGINNIS (OS, filtered)
Federal Marshals – don't move.

They shield their eyes... just enough to see that they're surrounded by armed FEDS. Lots of them, and moving cautiously towards them, rifles raised. AGENT MCGINNIS approaches, with two of the feds.

AGENT MCGINNIS
River and Simon Tam. By the authority of the Union of
Allied Planets, you are hereby bound by law.
(to his men)
Take them to processing.

Jayne steps in front of Simon and River.

JAYNE
I don't ruttin' think so.

AGENT MCGINNIS
What do you mean? We had a deal.

JAYNE
I changed my mind.

AGENT MCGINNIS
You can't change your mind.

JAYNE
(angry)
Why not?

AGENT MCGINNIS
Well, I've got your reward for—

JAYNE (VO)
No, No. That's wrong...

EXT. ARIEL – ST. LUCY'S MEDICAL CENTRE - BACK EXIT – MOMENTS AGO

It's as it was seconds ago. Jayne stands in front of Simon and River. Agent McGinnis stands before Jayne, armed Alliance Federal Marshals backing him up.

AGENT MCGINNIS
(to his men)
Take them.

Jayne punches McGinnis, knocking him flat. He elbows the Marshall nearest to him, grabbing the Marshals rifle and cracking him over the head with it.

MARSHAL
Get' em!

Jayne shoots him as the others return fire.

Jayne dives and rolls, shooting two more marshals as he comes out of the roll.

He ducks behind a bench and grabs another rifle. With one in each hand, he stands up firing both of the rifles as he moves.

JAYNE (VO)

There I was, Ma. I wasn't about to let the feds take the
helpless 'fugees. Not even Simon. I slotted one of 'em,

Jayne shoots one of the marshals, sending him flying.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)

Then another.

Jayne shoots another of the marshals.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)

Then I...No, wait, there was these two wackos,

TWO of the blue-gloved TROUBLESHOOTERS appear from nowhere, walking
straight toward the Tams.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)

But I got them, too.

Jayne shoots both his rifles, one into each troubleshooter. They clutch their wounds
and fall over.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)

Urh... then I...

But nothing happens. Simon and River look at Jayne. Everyone looks at him – even
the downed opponents look up. Waiting.

Waiting.

JAYNE (VO)

Ah gorramit!

INT. SERENITY – JAYNE'S BUNK

Jayne sits at the small table in his bunk. He screws up the top sheet of his letter
and chucks it across the room in annoyance.

Frustrated, Jayne snatches up his pencil and the stack of papers that comprise his
letter.

INT. SERENITY - CARGO BAY

Jayne comes in to find Book loading a small crate with some fish from the initial delivery.

JAYNE
Hey, Shepherd. What you doing there?

BOOK
Just packing some of the leftovers to share with folk on Haven.

Jayne sits on a crate near Book.

JAYNE
Not a lot of fishing on Haven, huh?

BOOK
Not really, no.

Book closes the crate and stands there silent.

BOOK (cont'd)
Thank you. For earlier. Not every day you have your life saved like that.

JAYNE
Weren't nothin'. Woulda done it for any of the crew.
(considering)
Maybe not the doc...

Books offers a quick smile. He sits next to Jayne.

BOOK
Still, thank you.

Silence, as Book struggles to say more.

MOMENTARILY ANGLE ON: River lying on the upper gangway, unseen, watching.

BOOK (cont'd)
I've done things, Jayne. There are things that... I wish I hadn't... I don't know that I could face any of you if...

Beat. Book looks into Jayne's eyes.

BOOK (cont'd)

People can change. God gives them that right and that gift. The man I am now isn't the man I used to be. The man who died today, Edward, he was from another life. He knew the—

JAYNE

Preacher, I don't know who you used to be, and I don't much care. We all done things we ain't proud of an' lived to tell the tale, me especial. The man you are now is my friend. He's the one I saved.

Book smiles softly.

BOOK

(quiet)

Thank you.

JAYNE

(standing)

That's what friends are for, right?

He puts his hand on Book's shoulder, then takes out his letter. Looks at it.

BOOK

That your letter to home?

JAYNE

(nodding)

Yeah, it's just... the spelling and... stuff...

BOOK

Mind if I take a look?

Jayne hands the letter to Book.

BOOK

(flipping through)

Got a lot to say I see.

JAYNE

Yeah, well she just likes to hear about all my 'ventures and I didn't know what to write, so I just kept—

BOOK

(stands)

Why not just tell the truth?

He hands Jayne is letter back.

JAYNE
(unsure)
You think?

Book starts to walk out.

BOOK
You mother will love you for who you are, Jayne. You
should tell her the truth.

Jayne shrugs an "I guess," and Book moves out the rear door toward the passenger
dorms.

CLOSE ON: Book as he leaves the Cargo Bay.

BOOK (cont'd)
(out of ear shot)
I only wish I could...

BACK ON: Jayne sits down on the crate and looks at his letter.

He grimaces, unsure, then pulls out a fresh sheet of paper from the back of his
letter pile. He puts it on his knee and takes out his pencil.

JAYNE (VO)
Dear Mother, I hope this letter finds you, Pa, Matty, and
everyone well an' such. Everything is okay here on the
ship. No real news, 'cept I saved the life of a good man
today. Felt real good to be the hero this time.

ANGLE ON: River, lying perfectly still, mouthing his unspoken words.

BACK ON: Jayne.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)
I'll look after the crew. And they'll look after me, so no
need to worry about me... Oh, also could you please send
me another hat, as River stole the last one you knit me.

ANGLE ON: River again. We slowly pan down to see that she is clutching Jayne's
orange woolly hat. She smiles.

BACK ON: JAYNE

MAL (OS)
Wash, tell me – why it is you still smell like you've been
rolling around in Jorgensen's trash?

WASH (OS)
Oh god, I don't know!

Jayne grins broadly.

JAYNE (VO, cont'd)
I'll send more coin back when I can. Your loving son,
Jayne.

BLACKOUT